

the reply. I would like to know that when an agreement was reached between 850 farmers of Jahura and the company and they were asked to provide tomatoes at the rate of Rs. 750 per tonne to the company. For this purpose, they were provided quality seeds. Seeds of seven varieties were made available to them and the farmers had sown and produced the tomatoes as per the instructions of the company.

MR SPEAKER You directly come to the question.

SHRI RAJNATH SONKAR SHASTRI Sir I would like to know whether the farmers of Amritsar have been benefited by this project. If not, whether the hon. Minister would make efforts to provide compensation to those farmers who had to suffer loss to the tune of crores of rupees on account of Pepsi Project.

[*English*]

SHRI GIRIDHAR GOMANGO The Company has not yet set up the Agro Research Centre. But the information which the hon. Member has given to me, I will enquire into it.

Extension of Public Distribution System

*62 **SHRI JAI K ADVANI**

SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

Will the **PRIME MINISTER** be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government propose to extend the Public Distribution System to the remote places in hilly, desert and tribal areas in each State, if so, the outline thereof, its action-plan and proposed time-schedule;

(b) the items to be so distributed,

(c) whether some specific items for distribution are likely to be added taking into consideration some special requirements of the above mentioned terrains;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the State-wise proposals in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL SUPPLIES AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED) : (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT

The strengthening and streamlining of the Public Distribution System is a continual process. The Central Government has been advising the State Governments/ Union Territory Administrations among other things, to :

- (i) using mobile vans in the areas which are unserved or underserved;
- (ii) to increase the commodity coverage;
- (iii) to evolve an effective coordination system among various agencies engaged in PDS;
- (iv) to organise sale of PDS items in Haats in Tribal areas,
- (v) to set up Advisory/Vigilance Committees at various levels, and
- (vi) to monitor the availability of PDS items to consumers at field levels. States/Union Territories have been taking action in this regard.

Six key essential commodities, viz. wheat, rice, kerosene, levy sugar, imported edible oils and soft coke are supplied by the Central Government to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for distribution to consumers. The State Governments/Union Territory Administrations are free to add, on their own, additional items of mass consumption taking into account local preferences.

The Ministry has a Scheme under which financial assistance is provided to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for purchase of vans to operate as mobile outlets in such areas.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI : Sir, one of the principal objectives of the Public Distribution System has been to insulate the poor and vulnerable sections of our society from the impact of mounting inflation. When the Government is seriously considering scrapping of subsidies, how does it propose to ensure that this particular objective of the Public Distribution System is not defeated and the vulnerable sections and the poor sections of society are insulated from mounting inflation ?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : I can assure the hon. Member the intention of supplying very essential commodities to the poor masses is there and they will be supplied to them.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI : How ? After all, it is a serious matter and the Government is seriously contemplating this question of subsidies. Even before that, I have seen that a Steering Committee constituted by the Planning Commission have recommended that the Public Distribution System should be made to function in a manner as to ensure that the benefit of subsidies accrues to the poor. Today, it accrues to all generally. But the recommendation made by the Steering Group set up by the Planning Commission some-time back say this. I am sure that this Government, even before the Planning Commission stated that thing, started thinking about scrapping subsidies and it must have devoted some attention to this particular recommendation. How does it propose to do it ?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : These subsidies are being given to various sectors.

As far as the public distribution system is concerned and as far as poorer sections of the society are concerned, as I just now submitted to the hon. Member that the intention with which this public distribution system was there, we will supply these essential commodities to the poorer masses.

Now about the general question of subsidies and withdrawal of subsidies and all

that, I do not think any decision has been taken so far.

SHRI LAL K. ADVANI : I would like to know about the Government's decision on the various recommendations made by the Steering Committee that I have already referred to. One of them is that even the coarse grains should be provided at the fair price shops. There are several recommendations. I am not going to read them out. But I would like to know the Government's decision on those recommendations.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : As the hon. Prime Minister said the other day, the whole scheme of public distribution is being re-looked into and some time during the session, we are also planning to hold a meeting of the Chief Ministers and the Civil Supplies Ministers of the States and we will know their views and a very comprehensive, a very complete public distribution system will be brought to the notice of the hon. Members.

MR. SPEAKER : May I bring to the notice of the hon. Members that I would be allowing one Member from one side, as far as possible.

(Interruptions)

SHRI MANORANJAN BHAKTA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the original question, it is mentioned about the hilly and tribal areas of the States and the Union Territories have been left out. There are some Union Territories in the country, isolated, remote and island territory which are also having problems of essential commodities sometimes it is due to non-availability and sometimes it is due to high cost. As such, I would like to know from the Government specifically whether they are going to take a special programme particularly for this type of island and remote territories of providing essential commodities through the public distribution system.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : The six commodities which are in the public distribution system are being allocated to the States and the Union Territories and the Union Territories also

have been receiving those allocations and distributing that also. The six commodities which we have mentioned in the Statement also are wheat, rice, kerosene, sugar, imported edible oils and the soft coke. The Union Territories and particularly the Union Territory from where the hon. Member comes, that Union Territory has also been allocated and they have been receiving regularly the commodities allocated to them. About the addition of further commodities, it is left to the Union Territories and the States and particularly, the Andaman territory has added many items to their public distribution system.

SHRI BASU DEB ACHARIA : There is a scheme to supply rice at a cheap rate to the tribal people of our country and that too, to the tribal people residing in the ITDP areas. Only 45 per cent of the tribal population live in the ITDP area whereas 55 per cent of the tribal population live outside the ITDP area. While this new scheme of public distribution system is in the offing whether the Government will consider to cover the entire tribal population of our country by supplying rice at a cheap rate which is now being supplied to the tribal population living in the ITDP area.

Second part of my question is this. I would like to know whether the Government will consider, while formulating the new public distribution scheme, the inclusion of other essential items, since we have been demanding the increase of the number of essential items to 14 in the public distribution system.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : We will definitely look into this.

SHRI SHAHABUDDIN SYED : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the very essence and purpose of the public distribution system is to make items of mass consumption particularly food items, available to the people at fair prices. We know that we have not been able to reach the entire population and much of the population has to depend on the market system to meet these needs. So, my question to the hon. Minister is : Will the Government consider, at some

stage, nationalising or regulating the wholesale trade in foodgrains so that the whole-sale prices can be controlled and, even if the retail market is relatively free, still the masses can purchase items of daily consumption at relatively low prices ?

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : Sir, I do not think we will be able to answer the question of nationalisation just now, because it is a larger question and we will have to look into that.

SHRI K. P. REDDAIAH : Sir, as of today, the Central Government does not have any definite public distribution system in India. But there is a good distribution system which has been successfully implemented by the Andhra Pradesh Government by Shri N. T. Rama Rao as Chief Minister. It is there for seven long years. (Interruptions) Why are you asking ?

I would like to know whether this Government has got any intention at least to look into that successfully implemented system and study it. By that system, the poorer sections of nearly one crore of families including the marginal farmers have enjoyed the benefit of it. Therefore I would like to know from the hon. Minister as to whether this Government is in a mood to bring the scheme, study it and implement the same in all the States of India.

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : The system available in Andhra Pradesh is no doubt one of the successful systems. But that is not the only system which is successful. The system available in Kerala, the system available in West Bengal, the system available in Tamil Nadu, the system available in some other States are all according to the local conditions and are running very successfully. We will definitely pick up the positive aspects and the successful points of the system in Andhra Pradesh.

SHRI ANANDGAJAPATI RAJU POOSAPATI : Mr. Speaker, Sir, through

you, I would like to know from the Minister as to whether the previous Government had cut down the food and fertiliser subsidies to a certain extent. Now, this Government seeks the IMF loan. There are also conditionalities for reducing the subsidies for food and fertiliser. What is the safety-net this Government is going to take to see that these commodities are delivered at lower prices and at competitive prices through public distribution system so that the efficiency of the public distribution system is enhanced further? If he is going to reduce the subsidies, how is he going to see that the system runs?

(Interruptions)

MR SPEAKER : I think that question was put by another Member. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI ANANDGAJAPATI RAJU POOSAPATI : Sir, I am putting the safety part of it. (Interruptions) What I am asking is that when the amount used for subsidy is reduced, there has been a slash in the subsidies. Now, this Government, in view of the proposed IMF loan, further decides to slash the subsidies

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : The issue price as on today is the subsidised price. (Interruptions) The subsidised price will continue. (Interruptions)

[Translation]

SHRI SATYNARAYAN JATIYA : Mr. Speaker, Sir, the hon. Minister said in reply to the question that the Central Government was aware of these things... (Interruptions)

MR. SPEAKER : Please do not read out the reply of the hon. Minister, you come direct to the question.

SHRI SATYNARAYAN JATIYA : I am coming to that. I would like to ask him as to how many areas have been provided mobile van facility? Besides, how many vans are operating and carrying con-

sumer supplies to these areas? Statewise details may kindly be made available.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Do you have this information

[Translation]

SHRI KAMALUDDIN AHMED : No Sir, this information is not available with me right now.

[English]

MR. SPEAKER : Next question. We may take Question Nos. 63 and 80 together since they are identical.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PRASAR BHARATI ACT

63. SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN :
SHRI LOKANATH CHOU-
DHURY :

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state—

(a) whether the Government have taken any steps for the implementation of Prasara Bharati Act ;

(b) if so, the details thereof ;

(c) whether the Government propose to make any further amendments to the present Act; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and the time by which the autonomy to the electronic media will be provided?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING ((KUMARI GIRJA VYAS) : (a) and (b) Most of the activities essential to the formal establishment of the Corporation have not been completed.

(c) Yes, Sir, if necessary.

(d) It is not possible to spell out the details of amendments at this stage. However, the Government is committed to set up Prasara Bharati and introduce competition in the electronic media.